



PETER COURTNEY  
President of the Senate

**Senate Committee on Workforce and General Government**

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*TESTIMONY BY SENATOR PETER COURTNEY*  
*SB 1579*  
*FEBRUARY 9, 2016*

Chair Dembrow, members of the Senate Committee on Workforce and General Government, thank you for hearing my testimony today.

My name is Peter Courtney. I am a State Senator. I live in NE Salem.

I am here to testify in support of SB 1579.

I signed on as sponsor of this measure for one reason.

I am a public policy maker. You, the members of this committee, are public policy makers. All of us in the Legislature, are public policy makers.

I think it is important for us to understand how agencies operate. It is important for us to understand why agencies take the actions they take, if we are going to make good public policy.

The Legislature and agencies have different roles under our Constitution. Our relationship with executive branch agencies is by nature adversarial.

That doesn't mean we have to be at war, but our role is to oversee the way agencies implement the laws we pass.

The more we know about how and why they do what they do, the better we can do what the voters elected us to do.

Ultimately, that will lead to better government and better services for our people.

Many of you have heard me say before that I believe that the legislative branch of government is in decline.

Our government is being run more and more by the executive branch and the courts.

If we are going to remain a co-equal branch of government, we need to send a message to agencies. They need to share information. They need to work with us, rather than against us.

I don't know if this bill gets us to that point, but I believe it does begin to send that important message.